

Borough Council Work Session

February 21, 2022

The monthly Work Session meeting of Souderton Borough Council, held on the above date, was called to order by President Tracy Burke at 7:00 p.m. Council President Tracy Burke noted that this meeting is also available for the public to access through Zoom to monitor and make public comment. This meeting is being recorded and will be posted to the Borough Website. The Borough Council Work Session was attended by the following members and staff:

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| President Tracy W. Burke | Mayor Daniel L. Yocum |
| Vice-President Edward Huber | Junior Councillor Nick Mancini |
| Councillor Matthew J. DiNenna | |
| Councillor Daryl W. Littlefield | |
| Councillor Julie A. Munden | Borough Manager P. Michael Coll |
| Councillor Donna Rogers | |
| Councillor Richard M. Walczak | Police Chief Brian A. Newhall |
| Councillor Courtney L. Wampole | Public Works Director Steven Coll |

Prior to beginning the scheduled meeting Agenda, President Tracy Burke inquired if anyone in the audience has any specific concerns or public comment. There was no public comment.

POLICE ITEMS

Police Chief Brian Newhall reported that the two new full time police officers will begin employment on Monday, February 28, 2022. Jason P. Saucier has met all conditions of employment and will join the force as a new full time officer. James C. Throop currently serves as a part time police officer and will now join the force as a full time police officer. A formal motion will be prepared for Borough Council to endorse the hiring at the March 7th Borough Council meeting and the Oath of Office will be given by Mayor Yocum.

As warmer weather approached, Chief Newhall will work with the public works crew to paint designated speed monitoring lines.

HIGHWAY ITEMS

Public Works Director Steven Coll reviewed public works activities for the month. Crews are concentrating on equipment maintenance. Preparations are being made to begin the storm water improvements for the Community Park project; pipe, inlet structures and erosion control materials are now ordered. Prior to starting the park project, crews will be working in conjunction with Grace Bible Church to address storm water runoff in an adjoining alley that creates ice concerns within their parking lot. Grace Bible retained an engineer to design storm water improvements, the Borough will assist with the installation

of inlets and storm drainage in the rear alley behind the East Summit Street dwellings.

PECO Energy will be extending a gas main in the 400 block of Wile Avenue, work is expected to begin this week. The Borough has some sewer work to complete in the 400 block of Wile Avenue ahead of paving the street.

President Tracy Burke was approached by a property owner questioning the status of the Borough's weed control program for this year. Borough Manager Michael Coll reported that Moyer Indoor/Outdoor has ceased offering curbside weed control for municipalities. As such the Borough will no longer spray herbicide for weed control. Residents and property owners will be responsible to control weed growth along their properties through methods as they feel appropriate.

Sellersville Borough expressed interest in purchasing the Borough's old bucket and utility truck as a price of \$8,000. The truck will be services and inspected prior to the sale. Borough Council will formally approve the sale of this truck at the March Borough Council meeting.

CKS Engineers has formally submitted land development plans to Franconia Township for the Public Works Facility project on the Borough's Cherry Lane property. The Franconia Township Planning Commission will review the plans at their March meeting. As the review and approval process moves forward with Franconia Township, work will concentrate of completing a financing plan for the project, which has a total estimate of nearly \$5 million dollars. Obviously the project will need to be phased with priority placed on the completion of the main building and necessary site work. The building design is nearly complete. We will be working with the Office of the Budget and their consultants to complete the RACP grant documentation and will be making application to the U S Department of Agriculture for a loan to fund the project.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Borough Council discussed the regular information packets that are provided. A combination of pdf copies with paper copies of individual summary reports will be provided.

Borough Council discussed ongoing issues with the sound and audio equipment in the Council Chambers. East Hill Media will be contacted to review the system and make necessary modification to improve performance. President Tracy Burke noted that a recent PSAB training course discussed the practice of video recordings of meetings. PSAB recommends that the posting of video recordings of meetings should be deleted upon the formal approval of written meeting minutes. This practice should be considered by the Public Outreach Committee.

DEVELOPMENT ITEMS

Borough Councillor Courtnee Wampole presented a report on the Economic Development Committee meeting concerning the Freight Building lease. The committee is interested in pursuing this potential lease agreement, but needs more information prior to a formal recommendation. They will be meeting with the Borough Solicitor to discuss next steps, such as asking the microbrewery for a business and financial plan and the development of a budget for the project. Borough Council discussed the need to finish the associated site work, regardless of the current potential lease opportunity. The work will need to be complete prior to any lease of the building. A recommendation was made to move forward with the completion of the site work in the coming months. The Borough will need to coordinate the site work with the rail operator with an expectation that work could proceed by early summer following the opening of the swimming pool.

Borough Councillor Daryl Littlefield presented a report on the Economic Development Committee meeting with representatives of the Souderton Charter School concerning their property at 27 S. Front Street. The Souderton Charter School is requesting input from Souderton Borough Council on the potential of redeveloping this property to support a community need or community benefit, perhaps as recreational space and parking.

Borough Councillor Edward Huber reported on the divided opinion of the Souderton Planning Commission on the regulation of murals. The current sign ordinance does not regulate murals. The Planning Commission discussed some general regulation, such as prohibition of pornographic or hate related themes, but are divided over other restrictions such as the placement of murals on front facades and limitation on overall size. The Borough Manager suggested that the Planning Commission also consider revisions to the overall sign ordinance which is overly comprehensive and burdensome to the business community. President Tracy Burke requested the Souderton Planning Commission provide a recommendation on both a revised sign ordinance and the regulation of murals. The Borough Manager will ask for the assistance of the Montgomery County Planning Commission in this planning effort.

Borough Manager Michael Coll reported on the property maintenance complaint at 236 E. Broad Street. The Code Enforcement Officer has evaluated the condition of the site and will file a series of citations with District Court. This property has a lengthy history with property maintenance violations, and there appears to be a few open warrants against the property owner. Borough Council suggested that the Borough Solicitor be consulted about any other measures to force compliance.

SANITATION ITEMS

Borough Manager Michael Coll briefly reported that Souderton Borough has

received requests for sewer capacity to serve a new planned development on Beck Road in Franconia Township. The Engineer is reviewing the request for capacity.

RECREATION ITEMS

Borough Councillor Edward Huber reported on preparations and discussions concerning the operation of the swimming pool. Staff is reviewing membership rates for our neighboring pools and staff is reviewing available options for the sale of daily admissions. It may be beneficial to have Borough employees in the pool ticket window to sell daily admissions, coordinate swim lessons and the scheduling of private events in the activity room.

Concern was expressed over the condition of the tennis courts at the West Street park. The three courts are in poor condition. A quote was received to repair and resurface the courts at a cost of \$49,000. A recommendation was made to consider marking out the courts to accommodate both tennis and pickle ball. The committee will give further consideration to the suggested improvements.

Borough Councillor Courtnee Wampole expressed concern with the potential of vandalism of the new fitness and playground equipment that will be installed in the Community Park. Councillor Wampole cited recent issues with juvenile vandalism in the Community Park and recommended more proactive measures to curb vandalism.

PROPERTY ITEMS

Borough Councillor Julie Munden reported on a recent meeting with the architects to discuss the floor plan for the administrative wing of the Souderton Municipal Building. In particular the administrative side of the building will need to have office space for an Assistant Borough Manager as part of a desired transition plan to replace our current Borough Manager upon his planned retirement. The meeting included a discussion to provide a larger Conference Room for Borough Council Work Session meetings and public accessibility to the Conference Room, which may require the relocation of the existing restrooms. The project may now require the temporary relocation of both the police and administrative side of the building to accomplish all renovations at the same time, which ultimately may be more economical. Work will continue on developing a revised floor plan and overall project cost estimate.

FINANCE ITEMS

Borough Manager Michael Coll reported that the Borough Solicitor has advertised an Ordinance for formal consideration at the March 7th Borough Council meeting to modify the terms of the previously approved \$500,000 General Obligation Loan for the Community Park improvement project. This loan was previously approved by the

Department of Economic and Community Development. The revisions address an extension in the terms to draw down the loan, which will be needed to provide interim financing for the purchase of the playground equipment.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

P. Michael Coll, Secretary